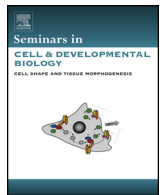




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Review

Role of fibroblast growth factors in organ regeneration and repair

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ABSTRACT

In its broad sense, regeneration refers to the renewal of lost cells, tissues or organs as part of the normal life cycle (skin, hair, endometrium *etc.*) or as part of an adaptive mechanism that organisms have developed throughout evolution. For example, worms, starfish and amphibians have developed remarkable regenerative capabilities allowing them to voluntarily shed body parts, in a process called autotomy, only to replace the lost parts afterwards. The bizarre myth of the fireproof homicidal salamander that can survive fire and poison apple trees has persisted until the 20th century. Salamanders possess one of the most robust regenerative machineries in vertebrates and attempting to draw lessons from limb regeneration in these animals and extrapolate the knowledge to mammals is a never-ending endeavor.

Fibroblast growth factors are potent morphogens and mitogens that are highly conserved among the animal kingdom. These growth factors play key roles in organogenesis during embryonic development as well as homeostatic balance during postnatal life. In this review, we provide a summary about the current knowledge regarding the involvement of fibroblast growth factor signaling in organ regeneration and repair. We also shed light on the use of these growth factors in previous and current clinical trials in a wide array of human diseases.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Historical background

Fibroblast growth factors (FGFs) constitute a family of evolutionary conserved polypeptides that are involved in diverse morphogenic and organogenic programs during embryonic development as well as homeostatic balance during postnatal life.

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